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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Thursday, December 8, 1938.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "INSIDE INFORMATION ON COATS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Publication available, Leaflet 117-L, Quality Guides in Buying Women's Cloth Coats, and When a Woman Buys a Coat (Ten cents.)

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December and January are months when a good many winter coats are bought, both to finish out the current season and to have in readiness for another year, because winter coats must usually last two, three or four seasons. Style must therefore be conservative, and color must be suitable for wear with all the different items in a woman's wardrobe.

Have you seen the "picture book" about coats, prepared by Clarice L. Scott, of the Bureau of Home Economics? It's a supplement to the free leaflet, Quality Guides in Buying Women's Cloth Coats. But the "picture book", whose title is When a Woman Buys a Coat, costs ten cents, from the Government Printing Office.

Miss Scott, in this illustrated booklet, shows many details that go towards good workmanship. She believes that women should give thought not only to a style that is becoming to their figures, but to fabrics that will be durable, and also pay attention to the way the coat is put together. That has considerable influence on the way it will look and wear.

You may never have tried to make a coat yourself, but there are a number of points of workmanship which you can easily check as you look over coats in the stores. See that the cut is accurate with the grain of the cloth. The coat will not keep good shape if each piece of the pattern was not laid accurately on the "up and down" of the fabric, or bias as the style may require.

The material taken up in the seams should be ample to prevent pulling out. Seams should be evenly stitched, and stayed with preshrunk tape to prevent stretching. The stitch should make a secure lock, and be adjusted in length to the weight and texture of the fabric. Strong thread should be used, and it should match the fabric in color and be fast to sunlight and cleaning. In making a first rate garment, the tailor presses seams open and steams them as he goes along.

One of the workmanship details to note is the way the lining is put in and finished at the bottom. In most good coats, Miss Scott says, the lining and the coat are hemmed separately and left loose, except for bar tacks at the seams. The coat hem is continuous around the lower edge and front facings. There is silk ribbon binding along the raw edge of the material, and this is invisibly stitched or hand-sewn to the coat. In cheaply made coats, this ribbon is often of poor quality and badly put on, so that it pulls out easily.

The lining is hemmed up so that its lower edge is an inch or so shorter than the coat. Then if there is any slipping or stretching as the coat is worn, the lining won't dropdown and show.

Front facings of a well-made coat are blind-stitched to the coat fabric on the inside to prevent that edge roll that spoils a coat's trim appearance. Stay material that keeps its shape may also be used down the front edges and is always used for interlining collars and rolling fronts. Padding is used to hold out shoulders and tops of sleeves in many present coat styles.

The body of a lining is seamed at the sides then fitted smoothly into the coat. It is then tacked at the seams basted around armholes and hand-sewn with fine, invisible stitches at the shoulders and around the edges,- that is, across the neck and down the front facings. Sleeve linings in best quality coats are hemmed in separately around the armholes. Sometimes they are made in one with the lining and hemmed at the wrists. The lining seams should be carefully matched to the coat seams.

There should always be a pleat about three-fourths of an inch deep in the lining, straight down the middle of the coat. This provides the necessary give when you sit or reach up in your coat. When there is too short a pleat or none, or only a seam down the back pressed to look like a pleat, the lining will pull at the armholes and soon tear out. Tacking at the waistline and lower edge helps to hold this pleat in place.

More details to be noticed about a coat are the fastenings. Buttonholes should always be cut with the thread of the cloth. Otherwise they stretch out of shape and will not hold. Worked buttonholes need to be stayed with firm cotton fabric between the coat and the facing and worked evenly by hand with durable twist. In bound buttonholes the binding should be of even width, securely fastened at the ends and corners. Durable buttonholes are difficult to make in loosely woven fabrics. In such cases loops may be more satisfactory. They may be of braid or elastic looping, or of the same fabric as the coat. Good loops are even in width, strengthened by an inside cord and securely stitched in with the edge seam.

You may find the buttons in an envelope waiting to be placed at the right line for good fit. If the store puts them on, ask to have a good strong shank made to prevent strain on the buttonhole and the cloth under the button. In fact, a small stay button on the underside of the coat will prevent buttons from tearing out the fabric.

You'll want plain sturdy buttons that won't chip or crack or lose color. If there is a buckle on the belt it is better not to have it made of cloth over a metal mold, as the metal soon cuts through the cloth around the edges. Composition materials, wood or leather buckles are examples of more satisfactory kinds.

The left front of a coat often has to be supported so it will not sag at the hem line. See that the ribbon support is sewed through to both lining and coat seam; otherwise the lining will be torn.

If there is fur trimming such as cuffs or sleeve pieces, notice whether they are so placed that the fur will be rubbed by a belt or other fastenings, or against the coat itself. Avoid high rolling collars that disturb your hair and rub against hat brims.

These are a few of Miss Scott's pointers on looking over coats before buying. Remember you can get the bulletin, When a Woman Buys a Coat, but it isn't free. It's well worth a dime, however. Send the money, not stamps, to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

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